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Message Text

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21
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 SCSE-00 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 /019 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:JRCOUNTRYMAN:BH
APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER
NEA/ARP:FMDICKMAN
SCA:MR.STEVENS (PHONE)
---------- 097762
R 220009Z JUL 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS STATE 180999

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, SA

SUBJECT: WELFARE/WHEREABOUTS OF REED D. KIRKHAM

REF: JIDDA 5054 (AND PREVIOUS)

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER MET WITH MRS. KIRKHAM AFTERNOON, JULY 21, TOGETHER WITH STEVENS (SCA) AND COUNTRYMAN (ARP).

2. MRS. KIRKHAM READ EXCERPTS FROM HUSBAND'S LETTERS DESCRIBING (A) HIS INITIAL F0USTRATION OVER HOUSING PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL LIMITATIONS, (B) HIS DEEP RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS AND CLOSE FAMILY TIES, AND (C) HIS ADVENTURE INTO BOOTLEGGING AS NOT TYPICAL OF HIS BEHAVIOR AND MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO AID A FRIEND WHO WAS ON VACATION.

3. MRS. KIRKHAM COMPLAINED THAT AIRWAYS ENGINEERS (AE) HAD DONE LITTLE TO ASSIST KIRKHAM, AND THAT IT HAD IMPOUNDED HIS FUNDS, INCLUDING SOME DOLS 2,500 HE HAD ON HIS PERSON WHEN ARRESTED. SHE APPEARED CONTENT WITH THE CONDITIONS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT, NOTING ONLY THAT UK EMBASSY VISITED ITS CITIZENS MORE FREQUENTLY THAN U.S., AND THAT HER HUSBAND
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CONCERNED ABOUT A GROWTH ON HIS SPINE. MRS. KIRKHAM ADDED

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HER HUSBAND HAD DECLINED MEDICAL EXAMINATION DUE TO LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN PRISON DOCTORS.

3. SOBER BRIEFED MRS. KIRKHAM ON SUBSTANCE OF JIDDA REFTEL. NOTING THAT HER HUSBAND HAD PLEADED GUILTY AND THAT HE APPARENTLY WELL-TREATED, SOBER ASSURED HER THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO EVIDENCE OUR INTEREST IN KIRKHAM'S PERSONAL COMFORT AND TO PRESS FOR RAPID SAUDI DECISION ON SENTENCE.

4. MRS. KIRKHAM SAID SHE WAS GRATEFUL FOR BRIEFING. SHE NOTED SHE HAD GEARED HERSELF FOR A TWO-YEAR SENTENCE, THEN DESCRIBED HER CURRENT EFFORTS TO KEEP HER HEAD ABOVE WATER FINANCIALLY. SHE DID MENTION THAT AE CURRENTLY HOLDING SOME OF KIRKHAM'S MAIL, AND SOBER SAID EMBASSY WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER.

5. IN VIEW PARA 4 REFTEL, WE LEAVE TO EMBASSY'S DISCRETION TIMING OF NEXT DEMARCHE TO SAG RE KIRKHAM'S SENTENCE. WOULD APPRECIATE BEING KEPT CURRENT ON PROGRESS OF CASE, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY IF ANY UNUSUAL DELAY IN SENTENCING IS ENCOUNTERED. ALSO SUGGEST EMBASSY CHECK INTO MATTER OF KIRKHAM'S MAIL, SUPPOSEDLY BEING HELD BY AE. ROBINSON

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